THE VISIONS OF Sir Heiſter Ryley: WITH OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS.

Friday December 15. 1710.

From Portugal-Row, *December* 13.

I Went this Evening to take leave of ſome Friends who were going out of Town; moſt part of the Night was ſpent in diſcourſing of Battles and Sieges, and the remainder in criticizing upon a Letter which complained of ſeveral Publick Abuſes. The Notion any one would have had of that Epiſtle from the reading, was, that if the Author might have the Management of Affairs, we ſhould ſoon ſee things change for the beſt. The Judgment of the Gentlewoman who wrote it is ſuch, that ſhe appears to be full of great Thoughts, but the Rules preſcribed are ſo contrary, to ſome Peoples Intereſt, that I queſtion whether the Project will ever take. There was a croſs-grain'd Lady preſent who hates that Women ſhould turn Projectors. I abhor her (ſaid ſhe) what does ſhe mean in pretending to alter the Cuſtoms of the Age? This is juſt ſuch a vaſt Undertaking as that of Dr. *Chamberlain*'s, who ſet up the Land-Bank to deliver People of their Money. The Gentleman who produc'd the Letter deſired her to be ſilent, and ſaid it was compoſed by a Perſon of Honour, which made one of the Company read it in Publick three ſeveral times. And as Aſtrologers are moſt buſie when the Sky appears to be the fulleſt of Stars, ſo ſome People are full of Conjectures when any thing is ſtarted, above their Capacity to apprehend. One ſaid he was ſure thoſe Lines were never written by a Woman; Men muſt be concerned in the Intrigue: For there was more Cunning hid in Diſguiſes, than in the Gunpowder-Plot, or the firing of *London*.

This raiſed a great Surprize, and put many upon thinking who it ſhould be. A Spark quicker than the reſt pretended he remember'd ſomething of the Stile, naming a certain Name; but that Notion was deſtroyed at one Daſh; for it was proved the Perſon he mention'd dy'd before many things contained in the Scheme were thought of. Thus it is always when fine Wits ſet about any thing that is curious; every Coxcomb is for derogating from their Parts, and aſcribing the Honour to thoſe whom their ſhallow Pates have mark'd out for Politicians. Here I was obliged to explain the whole Scene and Deſign of the Gentlewoman who wrote the Letter. I told them, I thought ſhe ſhewed the moſt univerſal Genius of any of her Sex that have appear'd in this Age: She is a Courtier and a Philoſopher, which are two commendable Qualifications. She ſays we ſhall never ſee happy Days ſo long as People make a Stir and a Noiſe about things indifferent, and diſregard the moſt ſubſtantial Affairs of Life; for ſhe has found that ſome Men have committed very ill Actions and are cry'd up for it. She is a Divine; for ſhe treats of ſeveral Material Points of Doctrine, which have been long eſtabliſh'd in the Kingdom, and is the ingrafted Opinion of a Multitude of People. She is a Lawyer; for ſhe lays down Methods whereby juſt Titles, Debts and Eſtates may be recover'd with much more eaſe and leſs Charge than they now are. She is a Healer of Breaches; for ſhe ſays, if People would follow her Advice, there would be no diſputing about High Church or Low-Church; Whig or Tory. She ſays, ſhe would have all People to lay each others Faults at their own Doors, and learn to amend one. In ſhort, ſhe is every thing, and her Diſcourſes have wrought ſuch a Change upon me, that I think of her with Admiration. I deſign to read her Letter over at leaſt once a Week, though it contains three Sheets in a very cloſe and ſmall Character.

From Bartholomew-Lane, *Dec.* 14.

HE that takes upon himſelf to adviſe in all Caſes had need be an able Counſellor; Experience has taught me much, yet I am oftentimes at a loſs for Preſidents. A young Woman complained to me that ſhe was bred a Milliner, and had Thoughts of ſetting up for herſelf; but ſhe feared her Age did not qualifie her for a Miſtreſs, therefore wanted to know how ſhe muſt manage herſelf in ſuch a critical Juncture. She told me ſeveral Gentlemen, who formerly uſed her Maſter's Shop, viſited her Brother on purpoſe to fall in her way, and doubted ſhe ſhould be obliged to be a little good-natur'd againſt her will: Beſides (ſaid ſhe) I am at a loſs to deal with Men in the way of trading; they have ſo many Wheedles to get Women to credit them: For tho' I was counted one of the prettieſt Maids on the *Exchange* for arguing the Cuſtomers out of their Money, when I was the Head Shop-

Shop-Woman; yet I believe I ſhall never do well when I come for my ſelf, becauſe I have lived idle, and kept ſome Company, which makes me forget Buſineſs and love Pleaſure. Some People (added ſhe) commend me for being free in Converſation; but they are only ſuch as want to gain their Deſires upon my good Temper. Pray, Sir *Heiſter*, adviſe me what I ſhall do, my Inclination is to Vertue and Retirement; if you could perſwade my Mother to take me home, and let no body know it, I ſhould be much obliged to you, and extremely well pleaſed with ſuch a fortunate Eſcape. Upon this Report, I could not but applaud the Maid's Prudence and good Conduct. I went and adviſed with her Parents upon this Occaſion; I told them there was nothing more expoſing than for Women in the Bloom and Flower of Youth to ſet up an Employment where the Trade chiefly depends among Men. The Father ſeemed very well ſatisfied with his Child's Intention; and ſaid he had half a Mind to ſettle upon her Part of his Son's Inheritance; but upon ſecond Thoughts he propoſed this Expedient. I ſhould be very willing (ſaid he) to keep the Land entire where it is, if I could make my Daughter in any wiſe eaſie, and provide her a Maintenance out of my perſonal Eſtate. I told him, I thought it would be more convenient for her to have an Annuity ſettled upon her, becauſe ſhe diſcover'd ſuch a juſt Senſe of herſelf, and knew that a Woman's Life is of all others the hardeſt to paſs through the World with Honour and Reputation: For we ſee among thoſe who are cried up for Beauties, tho' they have great Fortunes, that one would think ſhould guard them from all Attempts; yet are they too often attack'd, and led away to commit the blackeſt Crimes. Now I am upon this important Head, I forbid all Parents of Children who have any beautiful Daughters, to place them out to ſuch Trades or Callings as may be a Snare to their Vertue. A grave Matron deſigned (if ſhe had liv'd) to have publiſhed a Treatiſe upon the Subject of putting young Virgins out Apprentices, wherein ſhe thought of laying down Rules, and aſſigning the proper Duties and Qualifications to be practiſed by them, when they come out of their Times: This Piece would have been very uſeful to a great many People who work to the *Exchange*, make Mantoes, and keep Semſtreſſes Shops: For there would have been Methods to be obſerved, whereby the Fair Sex, though never ſo handſom, might be of any of thoſe Callings, and yet reſiſt the Charms and Allurements of Men, tho' they were never ſo tempting to the Eye, or pleaſing to the Fancy.

From Budge Row, *December* 14.

I Have ſtrove for a great while to pleaſe the Town with Variety of Subjects of my own ſtudying, which has a little impair'd my Health; but now I hope I ſhall ſoon have no more to do, than to look over Letters that

are

are ſent me, and give Directions to thoſe who come for Advice; which is a very eaſy Task, conſidering that many People who reſort to me are Men of vaſt Thoughts, and can gueſs very nearly what is to come long before-hand. One of my Viſitors told me laſt Night, that tho' ſo many complained the Nation is ſtill ſinking in its Trade and Credit, yet we ſhould ſoon ſee flouriſhing Days. I was going to deſire my Correſpondent to explain himſelf in this material Point, and tell him how glad I was to hear ſuch News. But a third Perſon turn'd the Diſcourſe, and began to complain of the Exceſſes moſt Men run into. He ſaid the World was ſo chang'd in forty Years, that ſome of the Inhabitants were like Perſons begot by Parents of a different Nature from the People of the laſt Age; for Men ſeem to act by other Principles; they are either free Thinkers or thoughtleſs Atheiſts. He who lives but a little while by himſelf loſes the Reliſh of the Times, and muſt have a Prompter to ſtand by him before he can be put into Countenance, to talk as his Company does. To Day I had an Inſtance ſet before me of this kind, which I penn'd down when I came home, and put Matters together in as regular a Form as a Man can well do when he is inclined to Sleep, and juſt going to Bed. A Perſon of a fine Wit chanc'd to drop in among a mix'd Company of Criticks; the Diſcourſe at the Table happen'd to be, that Pleaſure and Happineſs are only to be found in the Enjoyment of what we call'd preſent Poſſeſſion. The Gentleman interrupted them, and ſaid he thought true Felicity conſiſted in a quite different Property; for if it did not, new born Inſects enjoyed more real Delight than the Animals that ſwim in the Streams they ſpoke of. Here I was forced to maintain his Argument; for I perceived he began to be ſomewhat daſh'd at the Frowns of one of the chief Politicians, who ſate at the upper end of the Board. I told, that Simplicity of Behaviour, which is the Perfection of good Breeding, is become almoſt blind, and there is aſcended on the Stage a thouſand trifling Inventions, which Men barren of true Merit take up in the Place of it. Thus thoſe things which formerly pleaſed the Taſte of moſt People, now goes down almoſt with every Body like bitter Dregs mix'd with Poiſon. You are banter'd with a grave Face for expoſing the Madneſs of ſome Men, and ſay what you will they'll ſtill go on; there is no taking them out of Cuſtom and Practice.

THE